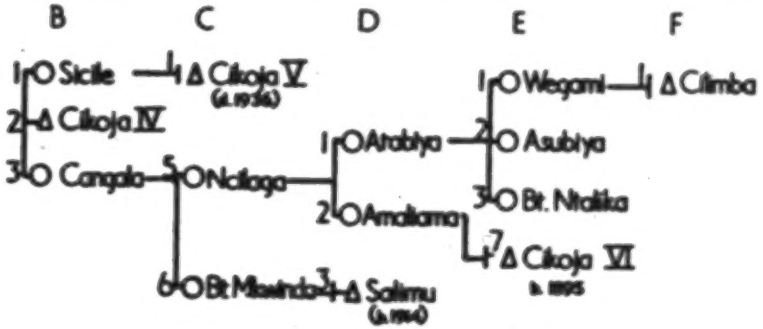
2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

him will be other people, but for us the bush does not eat a person.' [1] Mbulaje was left with a few personal adherents. My informant assured me that 'He is a most unhappy man to-day because he is forever accused of being the sorcerer who is causing the deaths of his relatives. People are saying that Mbulaje had broken the village because he wanted to be a chief when the people did not want him. The one the people wanted was killed. Nowadays, no one visits him because of his sorcery and the people are frightened of him especially at beer drinks.'

Immaturity disqualifies many prospective village headmen. A headman must be a man of experience and wisdom to take charge of a village. Unfortunately I cannot present quantitative data on



REFERENCE GENEALOGY. CIKOJA VILLAGE.

the ages when village headmen succeeded to their title, but my impressions are that unless a man is older than about 30 years he will not be considered for the name. Difficulty arises when there is a conflict between the principles of seniority and age. The older women do not always bear sons before their younger sisters, so that sometimes a man from a junior lineage section (*lisŏelelyanandi*) may be older than a man from the senior. If the younger, but senior, is, say, over 35 it is likely that, other things being equal, he will take the name, but if not the man from the junior house stands the better chance. This is what has happened in Cikoja village. The position is as follows. When Cikoja IV (B2) died, quite regularly the elder sister's (B1) first-born son (C1) succeeded. But many years elapsed between the birth of

[1] *Litinji liyangalya mundu.* In other words, if we go to live in the bush somewhere Mbulaje will not bewitch us. Yao sorcerers are supposed to eat their victims. See p. 117, fn. 1.

622 the children of Ncilaga (C5) and Bt. Mkwinda (C6). There
613 was a big difference in the ages of these two women. Ncilaga
561 died nearly 30 years ago but Bt. Mkwinda died in 1948. When
● Cikoja V (C1) died in 1936, Salimu II (D3), who was born in about 1914, was very much younger than the present Cikoja VI (E7), who was born about 1895. Ncilaga (C5) had no sons, nor had Atabiya (D1), her eldest daughter, so the succession passed to the only son of Amaliama (D2) who was the senior male in that generation. Salimu II, genealogically senior to the present Cikoja, is to be the next headman. He has married a 'cross-cousin' (his mother's mother's brother's daughter's daughter's daughter) and lives in the village. He has already taken over the affairs in one section of the village. The other section has moved out and built about half a mile away with the present Cikoja VI. Note that the junior house—i.e. the descendants of Citeleka (A2)—are completely out of the succession. Wegami's (E1) eldest son, Cilimba (F1), is living virilocally with Cikoja VI in his section of the village and is already opposed to the prospective village headman Salimu. He is likely to be the village headman after Salimu dies and may even push his claim when the present Cikoja VI dies, because Salimu has been accused of sorcery on several occasions.

622 The conflict between sister's sons and mother's brothers at
578 successions has all but fallen away. The people oppose with
604 some vigour the idea that a younger brother should succeed. Frequently the chief or headman would rather his younger brother succeed, and sometimes indicates him as his successor. Kawinga, for example, has given his pre-succession name of Mlomba to his younger brother and many say this is tantamount to announcing Mlomba as the next Kawinga. This is violently repudiated by most people I have spoken to and they indicate a sister's son as the likely successor. Jalasi too, before he died in 1941, indicated Mbawa, his mother's younger sister's son as the successor, but when it came to the point a sister's son succeeded. The weight of custom is in favour of the sister's sons and usually the succession is fought out among uterine or collateral brothers in the first descending generation.

643 A matrilineal relative is always chosen to be chief in preference
662 to any other, but sometimes there is no heir. Other things being equal an unsuitable matrilineal relative will be chosen, or a

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

against Cikoja himself. It is important that not once is a member of the junior major segment, that is a descendant of Citileka (A2), involved in the dispute. Only the descendants of Atabiya (D1) and Amaliama (D2) are involved, with the exception of Salimu who appears as the representative of the villagers on the old village site.

The Opposition of the Generations

Segmentation arises as more and more sorority-groups, the daughters of women, reach adulthood, and as the sons of the same women become old enough to undertake responsibilities for the care of the women. There is, in this situation, a fundamental opposition of generations. A woman is bound to her own sisters and at the same time she is bound to her daughters. These bonds come into conflict when her daughters want to express their unity against their mother's sister's daughters. The mother must decide whether she will go with her daughters to their new village site, or whether she will stay with her sisters and possibly with her own brother. I found consistently that a mother seldom stayed in a village when her daughters were moving out of it. The bond with her children is stronger than that with her sisters. Yet the conflict is clearly present. It finds expression in the kinship terminology. A daughter is usually identified with her mother's mother. A woman's daughter's daughter inherits her name, her position and her property in much the same way as a man succeeds his mother's brother.[1] When this has taken place the terms of address of her parental generation are now reversed. In other words her mother's brother instead of calling her, 'sister's child' (*cipwa*), calls her 'mother' (*amao*). Sometimes the qualificative *wamuja* ('who has returned') is used to signify the difference. Her mother's mother's husband even before the succession has taken place calls her 'my wife', and I have recorded one or two marriages between a man and his wife's daughter's daughter. A man's daughter's daughter must also perform some of the funeral rites for her grandfather after his wife has died.[2]

We have among the Yao, therefore, the familiar principle of

[1] See Chap. V, p. 121.

[2] She cooks the ritual meal which he eats at the end of mourning to protect himself against *ndaka*. Here she ritually fills her mother's mother's place.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

593 578 561 the identification of alternate generations; and this is particularly significant when we realize that the tension between the filial and parental generations is most likely to find expression in the situation where a group of young adult women wish to leave a village, and their mother, if she is still alive, must make up her mind whether to stay or to follow them.

562 613 561 The existence of rules of succession for men, different from those for women, presents an interesting analytical problem which I have not yet fully explored. Clearly men must succeed to positions in the first ascending generation, for they are the active leaders in Yao society and those who are to succeed must be sufficiently mature to take over the responsibilities of leadership. Women, on the other hand, are usually not leaders so that succession to positions in the second ascending generation involves no difficulties. A young woman may take her mother's mother's name without involving any responsibilities of leadership. Yet the interaction of the two systems of succession presumably has some reaction on the social structure. A man's sister's daughter who succeeds to her mother's mother's position becomes the man's mother and the man's mother's brother's sister. The man's own sister becomes his mother's brother's mother.[1] The effect of this presumably is to achieve some balance of power between a man and his mother's brother. By the rule of succession for women, a man's sister to whom he is tied by the closest possible ties of kinship, and on whom he is dependent for political success, becomes his mother's brother's mother, so forming a common link between two potentially opposed persons. By the same reasoning a man's sister's daughter who is part of his sorority-group and who is likely to desert her mother's mother's brother to go with her mother's brother if there is a conflict, by succession becomes the sister of her mother's brother's mother's brother, so forming a unifying influence within the lineage. This problem emerged after my fieldwork was completed so that I have no evidence to support these suggestions.

613 561 582 Among the men, because of the struggle for political power, the opposition of alternate generations is much stronger than among women. This emerges most clearly in the institution of marriage sureties.

The duties of the marriage sureties towards their wards are

[1] I am grateful to Prof. Gluckman who pointed this out to me.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

part of the normal duties of a matrilineage leader to his kinsmen.[1] But ideally each marriage is supposed to have two marriage sureties. The first, or senior, surety is called *mkokuogona*, which was described to me as 'the log that lies at the doorway'. The picture here is of a wise old man who cannot move around too easily, but who sits at the doorway of his hut ready to give advice and information to his younger kinsmen. In contrast to this is the junior surety. He is called *mkupanamo* or the 'beater down of dew'. He is pictured as a young man, who is vigorous about his daily tasks and who is waiting before the dew has evaporated in the morning, at the door of couples who have difficulties. He is essentially the 'one who walks about'.

The senior marriage surety is ideally supposed to be a mother's brother, while the junior marriage surety is supposed to be a brother. In fact, while the junior marriage surety is almost always a brother, though not necessarily an elder brother, the senior, for reasons which will emerge later, is frequently not a mother's brother. However, in the Yao mind the two are fixed in the relationship to each other as mother's brother and sister's son. The fundamental conflict of their positions is expressed by the opposition of the concepts of the 'recumbent log' and the 'active man'. This view is consistent with the segmentation and internal differentiation that must go on within a lineage. As the segments of the matrilineage become progressively independent of each other, the senior relatives, who formerly held them together, become less and less active in their affairs. In Yao idiom they become 'recumbent logs'.

The relationship between mother's brother and sister's son therefore is fundamentally ambivalent. By the values surrounding the concepts of descent and relationship, a sister's son and mother's brother are close kin and bound together in their attachment to a common ancestry and to a common set of living women who are in their joint care. At the same time the mother's brother, belonging as he does to the parental generation, must be respected by his sister's sons. Recalcitrant sister's sons may be made to toe the line by a number of different sanctions. A mother's brother, for example, may take his case to an arbitrator and bring the force of public opinion to bear upon his

[1] I have described the rôles of the marriage sureties more fully in *Marriage among the Machinga Yao*.